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ABSTRACT

A taxonomy of metadiscourse--defined as discourse that people use not to expand referential material but to help their readers connect, organize, interpret, evaluate, and develop attitudes toward that material--was proposed in "College Composition and Communication" (Vande Kopple, 1985). More surveying and classifying has been done since then, and the taxonomy has been revised. It should not be forgotten that while it is fairly easy to list linguistic forms, the primary concern must remain with the metadiscoursal functions and not with the specific forms that can fulfill those functions. Sometimes one form can fulfill more than one metadiscoursal function in one place; at other times one form can fulfill a metadiscoursal function in one place and a referential function in another. The revised taxonomy classifies kinds of metadiscourse, with the following subclasses: text connectives, code glosses, illocution markers, epistemology markers, modality markers, evidentials, attitude markers, and commentary. That many researchers have come to recognize the importance of metadiscourse is attested to by an impressive array of studies completed in the last several years. There are six basic areas of research: shields in scientific writing, effects of shields on readers, metadiscourse and problematization strategies, metadiscourse and ethics, metadiscourse in similar kinds of texts in different languages, and metadiscourse and instruction in ESL classrooms. Future research might examine how the various academic disciplines relate to one another in their uses of different kinds of metadiscourse, and what the implications of studies of metadiscourse are for translation theories and practice. (Contains 46 references.) (NKA)

Refining and Applying Views of Metadiscourse

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In this paper, I describe how I have modified the taxonomy of metadiscourse that I proposed in the mid 1980s and review the kinds of applied research on metadiscourse that scholars have conducted recently.

In 1985 in College Composition and Communication, I offered a classification system for metadiscourse, which I defined as discourse that people use not to expand referential material but to help their readers connect, organize, interpret, evaluate, and develop attitudes toward that material. At that time I noted that "the boundaries and internal characteristics" of these kinds would probably have to "be more closely surveyed in future work" (p. 83). Since then, I have done more surveying and classifying, and it is a revised taxonomy that I offer here.

In reviewing this taxonomy, one must not forget that while it is fairly easy to list linguistic forms, one's primary concern must remain with the metadiscoursal functions and not with the specific forms that can fulfill those functions (cf. Beauvais, 1989, p. 13). Sometimes one form can fulfill more than one metadiscoursal function in one place; at other times one form can fulfill a metadiscoursal function in one place and a referential function in another.

1. Kinds of Metadiscourse

1.1. Text Connectives

This first subclass of metadiscourse I have left essentially unchanged since 1985. Text connectives help us show readers how the parts of our texts are related to one another. We use connectives to guide readers through our texts and to help them construct appropriate representations of them in memory. Specific examples of these are elements that indicate sequences (*first, next, in the second place, 1, 2,* and *fourth)* as well as those that indicate a logical or temporal relationship *(consequently, at the same time)* (see Halliday and Hasan, 1976, for one classification system for cohesive devices).

Included with the connectives are reminders about material presented earlier in texts (*as I demonstrated in Chapter Two*) and statements of forthcoming material (*as we shall see in the final chapter*). Sometimes the parts of texts that these relate are adjacent to each other; at other times those parts are quite distant from each other.

Finally, sometimes we use what Williams calls topicalizers (*as for, with regard to, in connection with*). These are words that "focus attention on a particular phrase as the main topic of a sentence, paragraph, or whole section . . ." (Williams, 1981, p. 50). Like the other connectives, topicalizers connect bits of information to one another. Sometimes we use them to call attention to topics that are related to ones that we have been commenting on but that have not yet appeared themselves. Sometimes we use topicalizers to mark changes in topics, especially in the case of topics that we have mentioned earlier and that we now wish to reintroduce and expand upon. Finally, we often use topicalizers to reintroduce a bit of information that has already been implied or brought up but that now serves to set a particular contrast in stark relief.

1.2. Code Glosses

I also define the basic function of code glosses as I did in 1985: "to help readers grasp the appropriate meanings of elements in texts" (p. 84). Sometimes we judge that we should define a word or phrase for our readers. Writing in English, for example, we might decide that our readers need a definition of the German word *gemütlichkeit.* Sometimes we handle these definitions parenthetically (*gemütlichkeit*, which is close in meaning to *coziness*); if we are quoting others we generally place the definitions within brackets. Unless the words glossed are themselves the subjects of texts, as they can be in texts in language studies, the words used to define do not expand the referential material but help readers understand it.

There are other code-glossing elements that are somewhat different from those that give a definition. Sometimes we signal that there is a problem with the ordinary interpretation of a word; we use expressions such as *so-called* or *what some people call* (cf. Stubbs, 1986, p. 13). At other times we signal how strictly or loosely we wish readers to take our words--we use expressions like

strictly speaking to signal strict interpretations and those like *sort of* (cf. Aijmer, 1984) and *roughly speaking* to signal loose interpretations. At still other times we predict that our readers might be having trouble interpreting passages and we signal that we will re-phrase: *I'll put it this way* or *What I mean to say is*. Finally, in some genres, writers add explanatory details about figures or charts, often in postmodifying or parenthetical elements (as in "See Figure 4, *which displays these dipole resonances.*").

1.3. Illocution Markers

I also define the basic function of illocution markers as I did in 1985 (p. 84): With these "we can make explicit to our readers what speech or discourse act we are performing at certain points in our texts." All of our sentences carry signs in their features of mood of the general actions we perform with them. But with sentences in the various moods we often perform more specific discourse actions. We hypothesize, sum up, claim, promise, and give examples, among other possibilities. To make explicit for readers what specific action we are performing at a particular point in a text, an action that itself can be important when we switch from one action to another or when an action will have significant or surprising implications for readers, we can use such elements as *I hypothesize that, to sum up, we claim that, I promise to*, and *for example.* All such elements I call illocution markers. (See Beauvais, 1989, p. 15, for a theory presenting kinds of metadiscourse as "illocutionary force indicators that identify expositive illocutionary acts.")

Following Fraser (1980) and Holmes (1984), I now add in connection with the illocution markers that we can modify the amount of force that many of them and the act they signal have. For example, we can soften the force of certain discourse acts. We often choose to do so, of course, when we suspect that our discourse act will impose on other people or for other reasons will lead them to view us negatively. We might add a modal verb to a direct request: *I must ask that you.* We might add an adverb phrase to a claim: *As gently as possible we claim that.* We might add an introductory clause to a direct request: *I hate to have to do this, but I must ask that.* Or we can opt for the syntactic structure of a tag question to soften speech acts that are essentially

directive: "Sit down, *won't you?"* All elements that attenuate the force of discourse acts can be called mitigators (cf. Fraser, 1980, p. 342).

On the other hand, we can also boost the force of certain discourse acts. We often choose to do so when we suspect that the effects of our discourse acts on others will be positive or we think that they will need some extra nudging to receive and respond to our discourse act. In such cases, we do not just promise, we add an adverbial and use forms such as *We enthusiastically promise* or *I most sincerely promise.* All elements that heighten the impact of discourse acts can be called boosters.

1.4. Epistemology Markers

The epistemology markers are new to this taxonomy. Since 1985 I have come to see that various kinds of metadiscourse are linked in the overarching function of indicating some stance on the part of the writer toward the epistemological status of the referential material conveyed. I will discuss two different kinds of epistemology markers in turn.

1.4.1. Modality Markers

One stance we can take toward the epistemological status of referential material has to do with how committed we are to the truth of that material. Interestingly, when we are certain that our referential material is true and when readers bring no special pressure to bear on that material, we generally do not indicate our degree of commitment; we simply assert the information (cf. Coates, 1987, p. 116; Halliday, 1994). However, when we are less than fully committed to the truth of our referential material, we often let our readers know how committed we actually are. To do so, we use elements from the system of epistemic modality (see Simpson, 1990, pp. 66-67, on differences between epistemic and deontic modality).

Within the realm of epistemic modality, we sometimes show a cautious commitment to the truth of our referential material; we register doubts or "sound small notes of civilized diffidence" (Williams, 1981, p. 49). In so doing, we often try to reduce the "degree of liability" (Huebler, 1983, p. 18) or responsibility we might face in expressing the referential material.

To render such cautious assessments, we have many tools at our disposal. We can utilize the morphological system of English and produce forms combining *not* and *im-* or *un-*: *not unlikely, not implausible,* and the like. We can use adverbs such as *perhaps, possibly*, and *conceivably*. We can employ modal auxiliary verbs such as *might* and *may*. We can use lexical verbs such as *seem* and *appear*. Similarly, we can use parenthetical verbs, "which, in the first person present, can be used . . . followed by 'that' and an indicative clause, or else can be inserted at the middle or end of the indicative sentence . . ." (Urmson, 1952, p. 481). Some of the verbs that can signal epistemic caution are *think*, *guess*, and *suppose*. Other elements for signalling caution include such phrases as *to our knowledge*, *at this preliminary stage of research*, and *to a certain degree*. In addition, we can associate many different kinds of clauses with clauses of referential material: *It is possible that, I find it possible that, There is the possibility that, That* x is y *is a possibility, They are thought to be, It's thought that*, and *If I am not mistaken*. Finally, we also reveal a cautious stance with many tag questions, as when we add *isn't it?* to referential statements: "Frisian is a distinct language, *isn't it?"*

All of the preceding examples have been called hedges by many scholars. In earlier work, I too used the word *hedges*. In this practice, we followed Lakoff, who defined hedges as elements "whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy" (1972, p. 195). One problem with Lakoff's definition, as Prince, Frader, and Bosk point out, is that hedges actually "make things fuzzy in one of (at least) two distinctly different ways. One class of hedges introduces, or is responsible for, fuzziness within the propositional content proper, while the other class of hedges correlates with fuzziness in the relationship between the propositional content and the speaker, that is, in the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition conveyed" (1982, p. 85). Prince, Frader, and Bosk show that words like *rather* in *It is a rather good paper* indicate that the writer sees some variance from prototypical goodness in this paper but is still fully committed to the truth of what he or she writes. On the other hand, words like *possibly* in *possibly a good paper* show that the writer is "less than fully committed, or committed in some marked way" (Prince, Frader, and

Bosk, 1982, p. 85) to the truth of the expression. For these latter kinds of elements, Prince, Frader, and Bosk use the name *plausibility shields*, and I will shorten this name to *shields* to designate the subclass of modality markers that I am exploring here.

We can shield different linguistic items and discourse actions. We commonly shield whole propositions (cf. Corum, 1975, p. 139): *"It is possible that* the chemicals will interact." We can also focus in more tightly and shield individual words, as happens in the following with *perhaps* shielding *surprising*: "Shields appear in numbers that are perhaps surprising." On the other hand, we can focus more broadly and insert shields into propositions bearing on overall arguments. Consider the use of *possibly* in "In this paper we *possibly* have demonstrated a causal link between exposure to the sun and the development of various skin cancers."

Within the realm of epistemic modality, we do not always give a cautious assessment of the truth of referential material. Sometimes we "underscore what we really believe--or would like our reader to think we believe" (Williams, 1981, p. 49) by using what can be called emphatics.

As was the case with the shields, many specific forms can function as emphatics. We can use adverbs such as *certainly* and *assuredly*. We can use phrases such as *without a doubt* and *with no hesitation whatsoever*. We can insert clauses such as *I am certain* within other clauses: "The proposal, *I am certain,* will fail." Similarly, we can introduce clauses of primarily referential material with such clauses as *I am certain that, It is certain that, There is the certainty that, I would emphasize that,* and *It is surely the case that.* Variations on this theme are also possible: "That x is y *is a certainty*." We can use an exclamatory tag: "That was an error, *it was*!" And probably more often in speech than in writing, we underscore what we believe with an introductory command: *"Believe me*, it was an error!" Finally, if we use an exclamation mark within parentheses after some information, underscore words, or print words in capital letters, we are using punctuation marks and orthographic practices to fulfill the emphatic function (cf. Crismore, Markkanen, and Steffensen, 1993).

1.4.2. Evidentials

A second kind of stance that we can take with regard to the epistemological status of our referential material has to do with the "kinds of evidence" (Anderson, 1986, p. 273) we have for that material. That is, what bases do we have for referential material? To give indications about such bases, we use what are called evidentials (cf. Anderson, 1986, and Chafe, 1986).

I will follow the classification system for evidentials that Chafe (1986) offers. He identifies several different bases that we might have for the referential information that we convey.

First, we might be conveying certain bits of referential information that stem from our personal beliefs. In such cases, we can use an evidential such as *I believe that.*

Second, we might know some information on the basis of an induction. We could introduce this information with an evidential such as *I induce that* or *evidently.*

Third, sometimes we know aspects of referential information on the basis of sensory experience. For instance, we can hear or feel or see certain things and then use evidentials such as *it sounds like*, *it feels like*, or *it looks like*.

Fourth, we often present material that we have heard from others or read about in other people's work. To indicate that this material came from someone else, we can use what Chafe calls "hearsay evidentials," such as *reportedly*, *Sarah told me, According to Professor Snythe, the principal reported that,* and parenthetical attributions (cf. Prince, Frader, and Bosk, 1982, on attribution shields).

Finally, we often convey information that is available to us on the basis of a deduction. We signal that we have deduced things with evidentials such as *should* or *should be* (as in *should be* able to), *presumably* (as in "Young children *presumably* tell stories."), and *I deduce that* (as in "*I deduce that* you were victorious."). When referential information is in line with what we and our readers would deduce, we often signal this with an evidential such as *of course*. On the other hand, when referential information is not in line with what we and our readers would deduce, we often signal this with an evidential such as *oddly enough.*

1.5. Attitude Markers

The function of the fifth kind of metadiscourse is to help us reveal what attitude or emotional orientation we have toward referential material. Usually this attitude relates to the degree of desirability we attach to situations described by the referential material.

To express such attitudes, we can use adverbs such as *luckily, unfortunately*, and *happily.* We can use parenthetical verbs such as *I regret* and *I rejoice:* "He is, *I regret,* not very well." We can use clauses such as *I wish that, I am grateful that, I am afraid that,* and *It is alarming to note that* to preface other clauses. Finally, we can use exclamatives (*How awful that*) to lead into referential information.

1.6. Commentary

The final kind of metadiscourse is perhaps best labelled commentary. Commentary allows us to address readers directly, often appearing to draw them into an implicit dialogue. We can comment on readers' probable moods, views, or reactions to our referential material *(Some of you will be amazed that*), recommend a mode of reading *(You might wish to skip to the next-to-last chapter*), let them know what to expect *(You will probably find the terminology somewhat difficult at first)*, address questions to them, sometimes parenthetically *(Would you mind skipping to the appendix?)*, or comment on their actual or hoped-for stance toward us *(my friends*).

Overall, then, the kinds of metadiscourse include text connectives, code glosses, illocution markers, epistemology markers, attitude markers, and bits of commentary.

Some of these kinds are discourse about discourse in that they help us express our personalities and our reactions to referential material and help us characterize the kind of interaction we would like to have with our readers about that referential material. They convey what are essentially interpersonal meanings. Within this cluster I would tentatively include the illocution markers, epistemology markers, attitude markers, and bits of commentary.

Other of these kinds are discourse about discourse in that they help us show what we mean by individual words and indicate how we relate individual propositions so that they form a text that

readers can process coherently in a particular situation. They convey what are essentially textual meanings. In this category I would tentatively include the text connectives and the code glosses.

I have examined the kinds of metadiscourse separately from one another. However, several different kinds of metadiscourse can appear together in a sentence. For example, in *"Finally, I am sorry to proclaim that* you are guilty," one finds a text connective, an attitude marker, and an illocution marker before getting to the referential material.

I have also tentatively assigned each kind of metadiscourse to either the interpersonal or the textual categories. But as Ellen Barton (1995) suggests, in some texts some kinds of metadiscourse may fulfill functions in both the interpersonal and textual domains. She finds that text connectives, which clearly have textual functions, can in academic argumentation also serve "complex interpersonal purposes" (Barton, 1995, p. 235). Perhaps the kind of categorization that will emerge in future research will find ways to show overlaps between textual and interpersonal functions of language.

2. Applications: Some Recent Research on Metadiscourse

That many researchers have come to recognize the importance of metadiscourse is attested to by an impressive array of studies completed in the last several years. Here I offer a survey of six areas of research, a survey which because of space constraints must remain brief and selective.

2.1. Shields in Scientific Writing

The first area of research includes five studies focusing on the role played in scientific writing by shields (such as *seems* and *possibly*). These studies are by Crismore and Rodney Farnsworth (1989), Ken Hyland (1996), Greg Myers (1989), and Salager-Meyer (1994, 1995). Among the texts these researchers studied were Darwin's *Origin of Species*, research reports in cell and molecular biology, as well as research and case reports in medicine.

In general, these scholars found that the number of shields in scientific writing, including compound shields such as *It seems that possibly,* is perhaps surprisingly high. These researchers also found that in research reports, the introduction and discussion/comment sections have

markedly more shields than do the methods and results sections.

These researchers do not claim that the shields make the writers look weak or indecisive. Rather, they say that the shields bring a measure of accuracy into the presentation. In Salager-Meyer's words, the shields signal the presence of "the true state of the writers' understanding" (1995, p. 129) and "the strongest claim a careful researcher can make" (1994, p. 151). In so doing, the shields help create for the authors an ethos of caution and humility. The shields also probably help the writers signal to their readers that they value the readers' judgment about debatable matters. It is interesting, then, to note with Crismore and Farnsworth (1989) that through notes of tentativeness, scientific writers probably gain credibility.

In these lights, it is somewhat alarming to learn from Myers (1989) and Salager-Meyer (1994) that when scientific findings are presented in popular articles and textbooks, the shields and other notes of tentativeness often vanish. This phenomenon raises some disturbing questions. For example, if a scientific finding is uncertain and should be shielded, what are the effects on a society in which the only or main sources of information for some readers treat the finding as if it were firmly established? And what will happen to science students if their textbooks do not invite them to exercise their critical judgment about matters that are truly controversial?

2.2. Effects of Shields on Readers

The second area of research is related to the first in that it focuses on some effects of shields on readers. Crismore and Vande Kopple (1988, 1997) asked how shields added to one controversial passage from a science textbook and another from a social studies textbook affected ninth-graders' learning of and attitudes toward the referential material. In one version of the texts, no shields at all appeared. In other versions, shields appeared in either personal voice (*it seems to me that*) or impersonal voice (*in seems that*), with greater or lesser frequency, and in only the first half of the passages, in only the second half, or in both halves. After reading a version, students used various instruments to measure their learning of the referential material and to show how their attitudes toward the referential material had changed.

These studies had what are perhaps surprising results: In the case of both the science and the social studies material, the students who learned the most were not those who read the unshielded versions; rather, the ones who learned the most were those who read a version with shields in the personal voice, with lesser frequency, and in the second half of the passage. And when it came to attitude changes, various configurations of shields were somewhat helpful in effecting positive attitude changes toward the social studies material and very helpful in effecting positive attitude changes toward the science material.

One implication of this work is that the effects the shields produced should make authors of composition textbooks cautious about calling shields and related forms of metadiscourse such things as "deadwood," "padded expressions," and "wasteful signposting."

2.3. Metadiscourse and Problematization Strategies

The third area of research focuses on how two different groups of writers use particular kinds of metadiscourse. Barton (1993) examined argumentative essays written by one hundred academic writers for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and by one hundred university students for a writing proficiency examination.

In every one of the academics' essays, she noticed the strategy of problematization. That is, these writers present an issue and then state that it needs to be reexamined. She also found that sixty of the one hundred writers explicitly signal the problematization as well as many of their responses to possible counterarguments with elements of metadiscourse. These included text connectives such as *yet*, attitude markers such as *unfortunately*, and evidentials such as *according to a reliable source*. Barton postulates that academic writers see knowledge as the product of contrast and competition and view scholarship as progressing through critical recastings of prevailing ideas.

In the students' essays, Barton found less evidence of problematization. Only sixty of the one hundred writers problematize their subject matter, and of those sixty only twenty-nine signal the problematization with metadiscourse. Instead of problematizing issues, many students seem to

assume agreement and then state generalizations about the areas of agreement. Barton postulates that many of these students see knowledge as the result of shared social agreement and view scholarship as dependent on those who can form and express generalizations about that agreement.

Since the students' essays that problematized little or not at all did not usually receive passing scores on the proficiency examination, Barton suggests that the contrastive epistemological stance "seems to be privileged implicitly by the gatekeepers of the American university" (1993, p. 765). And she invites scholars to ask why "we seem to be rewarding our student writers primarily for reproducing our own contrastive and competitive epistemological stance" (1993, p. 766). Responding to this question promises to lead into many of the intricacies associated with argument and persuasion, including the kinds of evidence people in various cultures honor, the bases for these kinds, the means of verifiability for these kinds, the relative weights of these kinds, and the steps people go through as they come to accept or reject an argument.

2.4. Metadiscourse and Ethics

The fourth area of research centers on questions about ethics. Three studies in this area are those by Claudia Corum (1975), Holmes (1984), and Paul Simpson (1990).

Corum and Holmes have examined the uses of emphatics such as *obviously* and attitude markers such as *regrettably*. When such elements appear with propositions (as in *"Obviously,* Trollope was a great writer " or *"Regrettably,* they stopped doing research years ago"), these researchers ask whether these elements can "sneakily strengthen the force of the proposition by presupposing its truth" (Holmes, 1984, p. 353) or can "seduce the addressee into believing the content of the proposition" (Corum, 1975, p. 135).

Simpson has examined a particular use of shields. He notes that in "The Great Tradition," F. R. Leavis shields relatively uncontroversial statements (for example, about influences of Dickens on Conrad) and then leaves truly controversial statements unshielded (for example, "D. H. Lawrence . . . was the great genius of our time" (cited in Simpson, 1990, p. 89)). Simpson points out that this tactic helps Leavis nudge his readers into focusing on the little questions but skipping

the big ones about issues in the history of English literature.

One especially interesting thing about Leavis's tactic is that it joins the above-mentioned uses of emphatics and shields in raising important questions about how to convey material that is not accepted as certain. For example, which ways of using metadiscourse with such material are fair and just? If some ways are not fair and just, how serious is the harm they might cause? In the future, researchers might well ask such questions not only about emphatics, attitude markers, and shields but also about illocution markers, evidentials, and bits of commentary.

2.5. Metadiscourse in Similar Kinds of Texts in Different Languages

The fifth area of research addresses uses of types of metadiscourse in similar kinds of texts written in different languages. Mauranen (1993; see also Crismore, Markkanen, and Steffensen, 1993), has found that native speakers of Finnish use few text connectives in economics texts in Finnish, while native speakers of English, in similar kinds of texts in English, use a good many connectives. This finding accords in part with work by Michael Clyne (1991, p. 54), who found that texts in linguistics and sociology produced "by English speakers are far more likely to have advance organizers than those [in German] by Germans."

Mauranen writes that the Finnish school system teaches that using connectives "is not only superfluous, but the sign of a poor writer" (1993, p. 8). And she adds that the different Finnish and Anglo-American practices of using metadiscourse probably reflect different ideas of politeness and of what can and should be expected of readers. She would say that Finnish writers show respect for their readers by leaving more of the textual processing up to them. Work such as Mauranen's opens up many interesting questions about how people from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds develop definitions of politeness and face, how those definitions affect views of readers' roles (cf. Hinds, 1987), and how those views affect teaching about uses of metadiscourse.

2.6. Metadiscourse and Instruction in ESL Classrooms

The final area of research that I will survey addresses issues related to the teaching of

writing in English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classrooms. Salager-Meyer (1994, 1995) has found that non-native speakers of English have a difficult time in academic texts in English distinguishing claims that are accepted within a scholarly community from those that are disputed. Moreover, when they write, they tend not to distinguish accepted claims from the disputed (on this specific point see also Skelton, 1988). What such students need to gain, say Salager-Meyer and Skelton, is sensitivity to and skill with shields in English, a task that usually involves overcoming several daunting sociolinguistic challenges (see Holmes, 1983). To this end, Salager-Meyer and Skelton describe exercises that might help non-native speakers of English recognize and evaluate shields in others' writing and use them judiciously in their own. These exercises are similar to some offered by Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995). These researchers, drawing on work by Cheng and Steffensen (1996), suggest that instruction that includes reading about particular kinds of metadiscourse, analyzing the uses of these kinds in published prose, and employing these kinds in exercises and in their own writing can help ESL students become more sensitive to their readers' needs and produce more considerate and accessible texts.

Limitations on space keep me from extending this survey to studies that do not focus on metadiscourse as such but that address issues important to the study of metadiscourse--such as the study by Biber and Finegan on what they call the "basic stance styles of English" (1989, p. 95).

In addition, constraints on space limit me to the following short list of questions that seem promising for stimulating future research: Are there some kinds of metadiscourse that are particularly helpful for writers in various languages as they compose early drafts but that are really not necessary in published texts? How do the various academic disciplines relate to one another in their uses of different kinds of metadiscourse? What are the implications of studies of metadiscourse for translation theories and practices (cf. Markkanen and Schröder, 1989)? Can the "major content of an utterance" (cf. Ruthrof, 1981, p. 196) be found in the interpersonal and not in the referential domain? Finally, what would be the characteristics of a theory of overall textual action and interaction, a theory taking into account referential, interpersonal, and textual kinds of

meaning?

Although I have offered only a brief survey of recent research and a short list of questions for future research, I hope that these presentations will give readers a good idea of how lively and significant the work on metadiscourse has been and how much it promises to add to our understanding of composition and rhetoric.

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